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MARINE CORPS ORDER 3120.9B

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List

Subj: POLICY FOR MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT (SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
CAPABLE)(MEU(SOC))

Ref: (a) MCO P3900.15  
(b) Joint Pub 3-0  
(c) Section 5063, Title 10, Code  
(d) MCO 3120.8A  
(e) COMSURFWARDEVGRU TACMEMO ZZ0050-1-94 (C) (NOTAL)  
(f) NAVSPECWARCEN TACMEMO XL-0010-12.00 (S) (NOTAL)  
(g) MCO 3502.3  
(h) Joint Pub 3-02  
(i) MCO 5320.12C  
(j) Forces for Unified Commands  
(k) Global Naval Forces Presence Policy  
(l) MCO 5320.12C

Encl: (1) MEU(SOC) Structure and Organization  
(2) MEU(SOC) Equipment/Major End Items

1. Situation. This Order establishes the MEU(SOC) mission, core capabilities, and Mission Essential Tasks (MET). Also identified is the baseline MEU(SOC) structure and major end items. This policy guides the development of U.S. Marine Corps MEU(SOC) concepts, requirements, doctrine and training programs in accordance with reference (a). Also defined is the MEU(SOC) certification policy; which also serves to assist joint force commanders in integrating the complementary capabilities of assigned forces per reference (b).

2. Cancellation. MCO 3120.9A

3. Mission. Effective immediately, HQMC provides Marine Corps policy regarding the MEU(SOC) program and certification process to Marine Forces in order to meet the National Command Authority and Geographic Combatant Commanders requirements for a certified, versatile MAGTF that provides a sea-based, forward presence with inherent operational flexibility to respond rapidly to multiple missions.

4. Execution:

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commanders Intent

(a) The purpose of this order is to ensure a coordinated U.S. Marine Corps approach to executing a policy regarding the MEU(SOC) program and certification process.

(b) This order provides the required synergy by articulating a Marine Corps policy for MEU(SOC) training and operations, and directing supporting establishment actions. This order provides the foundation for the Marine Corps to review, validate, add and/or eliminate MEU(SOC) capabilities as well as examine our structure and training programs to ensure continued relevance.

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25 Sep 01

(c) End state: A MEU(SOC) program that guides Operating Forces, Reserves and Supporting Establishment to ensure the continued relevance of forward-deployed Marine Forces for the National Command Authority and the Geographic Combatant Commanders.

(2) Concept of Operations. MEU(SOC) mission, characteristics, core capabilities and MET.

(a) Mission. Provide a forward deployed, flexible, sea based MAGTF capable of rapidly executing Amphibious Operations, designated Maritime Special Operations, MOOTW, and Supporting Operations to include enabling the introduction of follow-on-forces.

(b) Characteristics. MEU(SOC)s provide the regional CINCs a certified, versatile, ready force comprised of four major characteristics:

1 Forward presence with operational flexibility. The ability to provide continuous presence and credible, but non-provocative, combat power, for rapid employment as the initial response to a crisis. Signals U.S. commitment to the region and is a visible reminder to those who would threaten U.S. interests. Includes engagement activities that shape and promote regional stability.

2 Rapid response. The ability to plan and commence execution of a mission within six hours of receiving an alert, warning or execute order. Includes the ability to enable the introduction of follow-on-MAGTF (e.g., MPF operations, MEB, etc.) and joint and or combined forces by securing staging areas ashore, providing critical command, control, and communication or conducting supporting operations.

3 Task organized for multiple missions. The ability to execute a full range of conventional operations, from amphibious assault to humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, as well as selected maritime special operations, across the entire spectrum of conflict, as an integral part of a joint and/or combined campaign, and transition between operational environments on a moment's notice.

4 Sea-based, strategic reach with inherent force protection. The ability to operate from ships (independent of established airfields, basing agreements, and over-flight rights) provides unimpeded and politically unencumbered access to potential trouble spots around the world. Includes the ability to remain on station, over the horizon of a potential adversary, without revealing exact destinations and/or intentions. Also includes the ability to withdraw rapidly at the conclusion of operations.

(c) Core Capabilities. The inherent significant capabilities of a forward-deployed MEU(SOC) are divided into four broad categories: Amphibious Operations, Maritime Special Operations, MOOTW, and Supporting Operations.

1 Amphibious Operations. An attack launched from the sea by U.S. Navy and landing forces, embarked in ships or craft involving a landing on a hostile or potentially hostile shore. Amphibious operations include the following phases: planning, embarkation, rehearsal, movement and assault.

2 Maritime Special Operations. Selected direct action missions conducted by specially trained, equipped and organized MEU(SOC) forces.

25 Sep 01

3 MOOTW. Operations encompassing the use of military capabilities across the range of military operations short of war. These military actions can be applied to complement any combination of the other instruments of national power and occur before, during, and after war.

4 Supporting Operations. Operations encompassing the use of military capabilities that support the spectrum of potential joint/combined operations.

(d) Mission Essential Tasks. The following METs have been highlighted to provide decision makers, both diplomatic and military, with an immediately available and precisely programmable "rheostat" of tailored cost effective crisis responses applicable across the spectrum of MEU(SOC) core capabilities.

1 Amphibious Assault. The principal type of amphibious operation that involves establishing a force on a hostile or potentially hostile shore.

2 Amphibious Raid. An amphibious operation involving swift incursion into or temporary occupation of an objective followed by a planned withdrawal.

3 Amphibious Demonstration. An amphibious operation conducted for the purpose of deceiving the enemy by a show of force with the expectation of deluding the enemy into a course of action unfavorable to him.

4 Amphibious Withdrawal. An amphibious operation involving the extraction of forces by sea in U.S. Navy ships or craft from a hostile or potentially hostile shore.

5 Direct Action Operations. Short duration strikes and other small-scale offensive action to seize, destroy, capture, recover, or inflict damage on designated personnel or material. In the conduct of these operations, units may employ raid, ambush or direct assault tactics; emplace mines and other munitions; conduct standoff attacks by fire from air, ground or maritime platforms; provide terminal guidance for precision-guided munitions; conduct independent sabotage; and conduct anti-ship operations. A required sub-task is Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) Operations. VBSS is the conduct of vessel boarding/seizure in support of Maritime Interception Operations (MIO) on a cooperative or uncooperative vessel, whether it is pier-side, at anchor or underway.

6 Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP). Rescue or extraction, by surface or air, of downed aircraft and/or personnel, equipment, aircraft sanitization, and provide advanced trauma-life support in a benign or hostile environment.

7 Security Operations. Protect U.S. (or designated allied/friendly nation) personnel and property.

8 Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR). Assistance to relieve or reduce the results of natural or man-made disasters or other endemic conditions such as human pain, disease, hunger or privation that might present a serious threat to life or that can result in great damage to or loss of property. Normally these operations are limited in scope and duration. The assistance provided is designed to supplement or complement the efforts of the host nation, civil authorities and/or agencies that may have the primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance.

25 Sep 01

9 Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO). Operations directed by the Department of State whereby noncombatants are evacuated from foreign countries to safe havens or to the U.S., when their lives are endangered by war, civil unrest, or natural disaster.

10 Peace Operations. Encompasses peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations conducted in support of diplomatic efforts to establish and maintain peace.

11 Provide Command, Control, Communications, and Computers (C4). Provide an integrated system of doctrine, procedures, organizational structures, personnel, equipment, facilities, and communications designed to support a commander's exercise of command and control across the range of military operations. Includes providing initial C4 connectivity as the initial entry force of a larger MAGTF, joint and/or combined operation.

12 Fire Support Planning, Coordination, and Control in a Joint/Combined Environment. Plan, control and coordinate fires from naval, air and ground assets in support of U.S. and/or designated allied/friendly forces.

13 Limited Expeditionary Airfield Operations. Tactical air operations from austere locations including short-field, unimproved runways.

14 Terminal Guidance Operations. The guidance applied to a guided missile between midcourse guidance and arrival in the vicinity of the target. Electronic, mechanical, visual, or other assistance given an aircraft pilot or surface waves to facilitate arrival at, operation within or over, landing upon, or departure from an air/beach landing or airdrop facility.

15 Enhanced Urban Operations. Encompasses advanced offensive close quarters battle techniques used on urban terrain conducted by units trained to a higher level than conventional infantry. Techniques include advanced breaching, selected target engagement, and dynamic assault techniques using organizational equipment and assets. This is primarily an offensive operation where noncombatants are or may be present and collateral damage must be kept to a minimum.

16 Enabling Operations. Operations designed to facilitate the smooth transition of follow-on forces into the area of operations. May include chemical/biological assessment, C4 for MAGTF or Joint Task Force higher headquarters and offensive and security operations to seize and secure terrain and/or facilities.

17 Airfield/Port Seizure. Secure an airfield, port or other key facilities in order to support MAGTF missions, receive follow-on forces or enable the introduction of follow-on forces (e.g., MPF operations).

18 Employ Non-Lethal Weapons. Operations planned with intent to minimize fatalities or permanent injuries and limit collateral damage by augmenting forces with non-lethal weapon systems.

19 Tactical Deception Operations. Actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary decision makers as to friendly capabilities, intentions, and operations; thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission. Tactical military deception is planned and conducted to support battles, engagements, and MOOTW.

25 Sep 01

20 Information Operations. Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. A required sub-task is Electronic Warfare (EW): any military action involving the use of electromagnetic and directed energy to control the electromagnetic spectrum and/or to attack the enemy.

21 Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance (ISR). Collect, process, integrate, analyze, evaluate, and interpret available information concerning foreign countries, areas and/or adversaries relative to the mission and area of interest.

a Reconnaissance and Surveillance (R&S). A mission undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an actual or potential enemy, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographical, or geographical characteristics of a particular area.

b Counterintelligence (CI). Information gathered and activities conducted to protect against espionage, adversarial intelligence activities, sabotage, or assassination conducted by or on behalf of foreign powers, organizations, persons, or international terrorist activities, but not including personnel, physical, document or communications security programs.

c Signals Intelligence (SIGINT). Intelligence derived from communications, electronics, and foreign instrumentation signals.

d Sensor Control and Management Platoon (SCAMP). Performs sensor implant operations, monitors sensors and reports information generated by sensors.

22 Anti-Terrorism. Defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts, to include limited response and containment.

23 Rapid Response Planning Process (R2P2). The planning process that enables the commander and his staff to conduct the following steps (Mission Analysis, COA Development, COA Wargame, COA Comparison/Decision, Order Development, Transition to Begin Mission Execution (launch of forces)) within six hours of receipt of a warning, alert, or execution order.

b. Subordinate Element Tasks

(1) Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations (DC, PP&O). Act as service coordinator for all service policy and serve as the focal point at HQMC for Joint and interagency policy matters.

(2) Deputy Commandant for Aviation (DC, Avn). Coordinate all Marine Corps aviation programs and plans in support of the MEU(SOC) program.

(3) Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC, M&RA). In accordance with reference (i), assign Marines to MARFORLANT and MARFORPAC by rank, grade, MOS, and strength in order to properly staff the MEU.

(4) Director, Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA). Coordinate pre-deployment intelligence support to the MEU(SOC) program to include providing intelligence to support COMMARCORSYSCOM's research, development and acquisition of MEU(SOC) weapons and equipment.

25 Sep 01

(5) Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command (CG, MCCDC)

(a) In accordance with reference (a), coordinate the development of doctrine, organizational structure, equipment, and facility support issues.

(b) Serve as the service point of contact for the validation of unique, MEU(SOC) low density equipment requirements.

(6) Commanding General, Training and Education Command (CG, TECOM)

(a) Monitor training to ensure compliance with established Marine Corps standards.

(b) Coordinate external school, Joint and interagency training support for pre-deployment training.

(c) Develop and publish Marine Corps training policy and standards relative to MEU(SOC) Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP).

(d) Serve as the Marine Corps point of contact for training and training facility support.

(7) Commander, Marine Corps Systems Command (COMMARCORSSCOM)

(a) Serve as the Marine Corps agent for research, development, and acquisition of all weapons systems and equipment, including low-density/non-standard equipment items, necessary to ensure that each MEU(SOC) possesses the capabilities required by this order.

(b) Coordinate the development and monitor the implementation of an integrated logistic support system to support the acquisition and time-sensitive fielding of unique equipment items.

(8) Commander, U. S. Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic (COMMARFORLANT) and Commander, U. S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (COMMARFORPAC)

(a) Provide geographic combatant commanders with organized, trained, and equipped forces in accordance with this Order.

(b) Coordinate the evaluation and certification of each MEU as special operations capable prior to deployment.

(c) Coordinate with CG, MCCDC/CG, TECOM for validation of doctrine, organizational structure, training standards, equipment, and facilities to support MEU(SOC)s.

(d) Report, via stabilization rosters, no later than E-210 days those personnel who will deploy with the Ground Combat Element and the Aviation Combat Element.

(e) Report when each MEU is SOC certified.

(f) Report and provide justification for significant deviations from baseline MEU Structure and major end items outlined in this order no later than E-150 days.

c. Coordinating Instructions

25 Sep 01

(1) Interoperability

(a) The MEU(SOC) is task organized and trained to operate with Special Operations Forces (SOF) as mission requirements dictate. This interoperability may be in the role of a supporting force or as the supported force if directed by Joint Task Force Commander employing the force.

(b) The Naval Special Warfare Training Unit (NSWTU) (SEALS/Special Boat Unit (SBU)) embarked aboard amphibious shipping may be employed in a supporting/supported role with the Maritime Special Purpose Force (MSPF) or other elements of the MEU(SOC). Effective operational and tactical interoperability between the MEU(SOC) and the embarked NSWTU, across the spectrum of MEU(SOC) operations, is essential. Prior to deployment, the MEU(SOC) will be required to demonstrate interoperability with the NSWTU.

(c) The Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) may operate in support of a MEU(SOC) conducting operations from the sea or a MEU (SOC) may be in support of a maritime operation. Effective interoperability is achieved through a series of combined leadership training events such as the Joint Maritime Tactics Course, combined at-sea training, and a formal evaluation. These training events, when practical, can be used to provide insight into the interoperability of the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG)/MEU and CVBG.

(2) Deployment of Standby Detachments. Standby detachments are organic to the MEU(SOC)s but do not deploy, initially, with the respective MEU(SOC) due to the detachments' low density, high demand status within the USMC. These detachments are included in the MEU(SOC) force list, task organization, and associated TFPDD, as on-call forces, in order to reflect that the MEU(SOC) Commander has pre-identified these on-call assets. MEU(SOC) standby detachments, which typically consist of a VMGR KC-130 detachment, an MLE detachment, and the MEU Command Element Battlestaff augments, are integral elements of the MAGTF. Even though these detachments may stay with the parent Marine Expeditionary Force when the MEU(SOC) initially deploys, the detachment commanders report to the MEU(SOC) Commander, OPCON, at E-180, for predeployment training, and exercise/contingency employment. To call forward these on-call forces, the MEU(SOC) Commander validates the requirement(s) for the force to the supported CINC via his operational chain of command; info the supported Cinc's U.S. Marine Corps component commander. This "validation message" includes the on-call TPFDD unit-line-numbers of the appropriate detachment(s). The supported CINC, then validates the updated TPFDD to the supporting CINC and the supporting component commander who coordinates deployment of the on-call detachment(s). If strategic lift and/or tanking are required to deploy the on-call force, validation of the requirement for the detachment(s) by the supported CINC constitutes authority for USCINTRANS to schedule appropriate strategic lift and tanking in support of the deployment. As these forces are attached to the forward deployed MEU(SOC) commander in an on-call status, a separate CJCS deployment order is not required to deploy the force.

(3) Leave-Behind-Equipment. While the combination of shipping and mission requirements may dictate equipment to be placed in a leave-behind-equipment status, every effort should be made to minimize the amount of equipment left in this status.

(4) Baseline MEU(SOC) Equipment. The equipment Table of Equipment (T/E) for a deployed MEU(SOC) is based primarily on the general purpose-force precept of the MEU(SOC). Adjustments to the basic T/E may be made based upon the MEU(SOC)

25 Sep 01

Commander's estimate of the situation regarding the upcoming deployment. The major items of combat essential equipment for a notional MEU(SOC) are shown in enclosure (2).

(5) MEU(SOC) Pre-deployment Training Program (PTP)

(a) Reference (g) provides training policy and guidance, and serves the primary source document for the MEU(SOC) PTP.

(b) The MEU(SOC) commander is responsible for the training of his command. Progressive improvement in individual and unit skills attained through enhanced training and the addition of specialized equipment allow a MEU to execute a full range of conventional and selected maritime special operations missions. This is accomplished by means of a dedicated and intensive PTP of about 26 weeks, which is focused and standardized, and follows a progressive building block approach to training. The PTP is designed to integrate the Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) and MEU, as well as other designated U.S. Navy forces (e.g., NSWTU and CVBGs) to optimize their inherent capabilities. Early personnel stabilization is essential to the overall effectiveness of the PTP.

(c) The MEU commander requires external training assistance from Force Commanders and agencies external the U.S. Marine Corps, due to the nature of the specialized training and the sensitivity of the maritime special operations mission. Close coordination with respective U.S. Navy commands will ensure that appropriate interoperability training among U.S. Navy and Marine Corps units is accomplished throughout the initial collective, intermediate, and final training phases of the PTP cycle. Opportunities to train with joint special operations forces should be pursued at all levels.

(6) MEU(SOC) Certification Policy

(a) The certification process is continuous in nature and encompasses training events/evaluations throughout the entire PTP. Only those MEUs which have undergone the PTP and have successfully completed a thorough evaluation/certification under the cognizance of the MEF Commander shall be designated as SOC.

(b) All MEU(SOC)s shall be capable of executing the full range of core capabilities/mission essential tasks (MET) prescribed in this Order. Prior to deployment, each MEU(SOC) will be formally evaluated and certified in accordance with paragraph 8 of reference (g).

(c) The SOC evaluation will include events representative of conventional and selected maritime special operations capabilities, and require the MEU to plan and conduct multiple missions simultaneously.

(d) SOC certification encompasses the ARG as well as the MEU. COMMARFORs Atlantic/Pacific will SOC-certify their MEUs. This authority may be delegated to the appropriate Marine Expeditionary Force Commander.

(7) Command Relationships.

(a) Prior to deployment, when the MEU is not embarked aboard U.S. Navy ships, the MEF Commander exercises command of his organic MEU.

(b) USCINCFJCOM and USCINCPAC are directed by the Secretary of Defense, via CJCS, to execute the Global Naval Force Presence Policy (GNFPP) schedule (i.e., conduct pre-deployment training, deploy, and transfer rotational



25 Sep 01

amphibious forces to designated Unified Combatant Commander's operational control (OPCON) for exercises, contingency employment, anti-terrorism/force protection (AT/FP) and redeployment).

(c) The Unified Combatant Commanders, providing amphibious forces for deployment, are supporting commanders and exercise Combatant Command, (command authority) (COCOM) of deploying forces. The Unified Combatant Commander, providing amphibious forces, normally directs his U.S. Marine Corps Component Commander to transfer the MEU(SOC) to the U.S. Navy Component Commander, OPCON for embarkation, pre-deployment training, deployment, transit operations, and AT/FP. When directed, the U.S. Navy Component Commander deploys the MEU(SOC) to another Unified Combatant Commander's Area of Responsibility (AOR), and transfers the deploying MEU(SOC) to the supported Unified Combatant Commander, OPCON for designated contingencies, exercises, employment, AT/FP, and redeployment.

(d) The supporting U.S. Navy Component Commander receives the MEU (SOC), OPCON for embarkation, pre-deployment training, deployment, transit operations, and AT/FP. The U.S. Navy Component Commander exercises OPCON for embarkation through the Commanding Generals of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLANT) or Pacific (FMFPAC). Once embarked, the supporting U.S. Navy Component Commander exercises OPCON of the MEU(SOC) through the numbered fleet commander for pre-deployment training, deployment, transit operations, and AT/FP. Upon arrival of forces in a supported Unified Combatant Commanders AOR, the numbered fleet commander affects the transfer of the MEU(SOC) to the supported Unified Combatant Commander, OPCON.

(e) The receiving Unified Combatant Commander (the supported Combatant Commander) normally effects reception, staging, and onward movement of the MEU(SOC), if required, through his U.S. Marine Corps Component Commander. The U.S. Marine Corps Component Commander, when directed, exercises OPCON of the MEU(SOC) for contingency employment, AT/FP and redeployment.

(f) Unless otherwise directed by the supported Unified Combatant Commander, the U.S. Navy Component Commander normally exercises OPCON of the MEU (SOC) through the numbered fleet commander for exercises, contingency employment, AT/FP, and redeployment.

(g) During contingencies, the supported Joint Force Commander (JFC) publishes an OpOrder that includes establishment of command relationships within the joint force to ensure unity of effort. The supported JFC may designate a supported commander throughout an amphibious operation. If a support relationship is designated, normally the U.S. Navy and landing force commanders of the joint force develop draft tasks and appropriate command relationships. This action is accomplished during the planning phase to provide the specifics of the support relationship to the JFC. The draft tasks and command relationships are then submitted to the JFC for approval and promulgation. The MEU(SOC) Commander may be designated as the Commander, Joint Task Force (CJTf), a separate USMC component commander within a Joint force, or a functional component commander. The MEU(SOC) commander can be directed to report to a Joint force commander, another Service component commander or a functional Component commander, OPCON, TACON or Support for the conduct of an exercise/operation. If the MEU(SOC) commander is the senior U.S. Marine Corps Commander in the Joint force, he is the U.S. Marine Force (MARFOR) Component Commander. This relationship as the MARFOR Commander ensures leveraging the MEU(SOC) commander's position to affirm decision-making and span of control as prescribed in Joint Doctrine for amphibious operations.

25 Sep 01

8. Applicability. This Order applies to MEUs formed from forces resident in U. S. Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic (MARFORLANT) 22d, 24th and 26th MEUs) and U. S. Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) (11th, 13th, 15th and 31st MEUs).

5. Admin and Logistics

a. As an excepted command, the MEU CE is manned and staffed at 100 percent of chargeable Tables of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E) by grade and MOS.

b. Key personnel are assigned for duty to the MEU CE under the following two-tiered system. Tier 1 personnel are assigned to ensure availability for two pre-deployment training/deployment cycles.

(1) Tier 1. Tier 1 personnel are sourced no later than 240 days prior to embarkation (E-240); Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Sergeant Major, Administrative Officer, Intelligence Officer, Operations Officer, Air Officer, Logistics Officer, Embarkation Officer, Supply Officer, Public Affairs Officer, Force Protection Officer, and the Communications Officer.

(2) Tier 2. Tier 2 personnel are sourced no later than E-180; Assistant Intelligence Officer, Assistant Operations Officer, Assistant Air Officer, Target Information Officer, Fire Support Officer, NBC Officer, Assistant Logistics Officer, Headquarters Commandant, and Assistant Communications Officer

c. All U. S. Marine Corps infantry battalions and flying squadrons are categorized as priority commands. Priority commands are manned at 95 percent of chargeable T/O&E strength. They will be staffed at 100 percent of that manning level in gross numbers.

d. All U. S. Marine Corps infantry battalions and flying squadrons assigned to MEU's are provided sufficient personnel to meet staffing requirements no later than 180 days prior to embarkation. Infantry battalions and flying squadrons are not normally staffed above staffing goal.

e. Key personnel are available for duty to the infantry battalions and flying squadrons that are assigned to MEUs no later than E-210. These key personnel include the Battalion, Squadron, and MSSG Commanders, Executive Officers, Sergeants Major, Administrative Officers, Intelligence Officers, Operations Officers, Supply Officers, and Company/Battery Commanders.

6. Command and Signal

a. Command. MEU(SOC) Organization and Structure

(1) Task Organization. The forward-deployed MEU(SOC) is uniquely organized, trained and equipped to provide the naval or Joint force commander with an expeditionary force that is inherently balanced, sustainable, flexible, responsive, expandable, and credible. Normally embarked aboard three ships of an ARG, it is task-organized to accomplish a broad range of mission requirements. The MEU is comprised of a command element (CE); a reinforced infantry battalion as the ground combat element (GCE); a reinforced helicopter squadron as the aviation combat element (ACE); and a combat service support element (CSSE) designated the MEU Service Support Group (MSSG). Figure (1) and enclosure (1) illustrate the notional task organization of a MEU.

25 Sep 01

Command Element (CE)		
Aviation Combat Element (ACE)	Ground Combat Element (GCE)	Combat Service Support Element (CSSE)
Composite Squadron	Battalion Landing Team (BLT)	MEU Service Support Group (MSSG)

Figure 1. MEU(SOC) Task Organization

(2) The CE provides the command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I) necessary for effective planning and execution of operations in a joint/combined environment. The CE is a permanent organization comprised of a commanding officer, executive officer, supporting staff, and the following detachments:

(a) Force Reconnaissance Company (FORECON) detachment. Provides direct action capability and ground reconnaissance within the MEU(SOC) commander's area of interest.

(b) Radio Battalion (RadBn) detachment. Provides an enhanced capability for SIGINT collection, analysis, and electronic warfare (EW). A radio reconnaissance team (RRT) capability is included for advance force employment during selected operations.

(c) Communications Battalion (CommBn) detachments. Provides command and control communications for all operations. The Mobile Command and Control Team (MCCT) provides JTF, SOF or follow-on-force enabling capability.

(d) Intelligence Battalion Detachments. Provides intelligence support for all operations. It includes:

1 Human Intelligence Exploitation Team (HET). Provides counterintelligence and interrogation/document translation support.

2 Force Imagery Interpretation Unit (FIIU). Provides limited imagery interpretation support.

3 Topographic (TOPO) Platoon. Provides limited cartography and terrain model building capability.

4 SCAMP. Plans the employment of, operates, maintains, and reports information generated from remote sensor systems.

(e) Marine Liaison Element Detachment. Provides fire control capabilities for Joint, Combined, and coalition forces working in concert with the MEU.

(3) The GCE BLT, is a reinforced infantry battalion of approximately 1,200 Marines. The GCE is structured as follows

(a) Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and staff.

- (b) Headquarters & Service (H&S) Company.
- (c) Scout Sniper Platoon.
- (d) Infantry Company x (3).
- (e) Weapons Company.

(f) Artillery Battery (configured with six 155mm howitzers). The artillery battery includes its own truck platoon with a mix of 1-ton and 5-ton trucks for carrying ammunition and other supplies, and for towing artillery pieces.

(g) Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) detachment (configured with seven to 16 Light Armored Vehicles (LAV)). Provides mobile reconnaissance, screening and strike capability with its LAVs and organic scouts.

(h) Assault Amphibian Vehicle (AAV) platoon (configured with fifteen AAVs). Provides amphibious-assault, ship-to-shore movement and ground mobility.

(i) Combat Engineer platoon. Provides mobility enhancement, survivability, counter-mobility, and general engineer support.

(j) Reconnaissance platoon. Provides ground reconnaissance and surveillance, and intelligence collection and reporting within the MEU(SOC) commander's area of influence.

(k) Shore Fire Control Party (SFCP). Provides naval surface fire support.

(l) Tank platoon (configured with four M1A1 main battle tanks). Provides a limited heavy armor capability to ground forces ashore.

(4) The ACE is a reinforced helicopter squadron that includes AV-8B Harrier attack aircraft or other fixed-wing fighter/attack aircraft units, if required, and two CONUS based KC-130 aircraft. The ACE is task organized to provide assault support; fixed wing and rotary wing close air support, airborne command and control, and low-level, close-in air defense. The ACE is structured as follows

- (a) Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, and staff.

(b) Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM) detachment. Provides medium-lift assault support. (Configured with twelve CH-46E helicopters, projected to be replaced by the MV-22 in FY03).

(c) Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) detachment (configured with four CH-53E helicopters). Provides extended-range, heavy-lift assault support.

(d) Marine Light Attack Squadron (HMLA) detachment (configured with four AH-1W attack helicopters and two/three UH-1N utility helicopters). Provides close air support, airborne command and control, and escort.

25 Sep 01

(e) Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) or Fighter/Attack Squadron (VMFA) detachment (configured with six AV-8B Harrier or F/A-18 aircraft). Provides organic close air support.

(f) Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron (VMGR) detachment (configured with two KC-130 aircraft). Provides refueling services for embarked helicopters, AV-8B aircraft, and performs other support tasks (e.g., parachute operations, flare drops, cargo transportation, etc.) as required. Maximum flexibility is maintained with an airborne command, control and coordination capability. The detachment trains with the MEU throughout the PTP, and then is on CONUS standby, prepared to deploy within 96 hours.

(g) Marine Air Control Group (MACG). The MACG detachment encompasses the following

1 Headquarters Element.

2 Air Support Element. Provides a limited Direct Air Support Center (DASC) capable of Providing tactical, procedural control of aircraft functions for enhanced integration of air support into the MEU(SOC) scheme of maneuver.

3 Low Altitude Air Defense (LAAD) Section. Provides low level, close-in air defense for MEU/ARG air defense priorities.

4 Marine Air Traffic Control Team (ATC) Mobile Team. Provides expeditionary ATC services to austere/remote landing sites and interface with host nation / joint ATC regarding MEU(SOC) operations.

(h) Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) detachment. Provides aviation bulk fuel and limited food service support.

(i) Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS) detachment. Provides intermediate maintenance and aviation supply support.

(5) The Marine Service Support Group (MSSG) provides a full range of combat service support necessary to accomplish all assigned missions. It is organized to provide supply, maintenance, transportation, deliberate engineering, medical and dental, automated information processing, utilities, landing support (port/airfield support operations), disbursing, legal, and postal services to the entire MEU(SOC). The MSSG is structured as follows

(a) Commanding Officer, executive officer, and staff.

(b) H&S Platoon

1 ISMO (ADP) Det.

2 Disbursing Det.

3 Postal Det.

(c) Supply detachment. Provides 15 days sustainability in class I, II, IIIB, IV, V, VIII, IX supply support and secondary repairable support.

(d) Communications detachment. Provides command and control communication support.

25 Sep 01

(e) Engineer Support Battalion detachment. Provides deliberate engineering support, to include limited construction, bulk fuel storage, potable water production/storage, utilities and explosive ordnance disposal.

(f) Transportation Battalion detachment. Provides beach/port support team and helicopter support team operations, general ground transportation for cargo, fuel, water, and personnel movements.

(g) Maintenance Battalion detachment. Provides intermediate through limited depot level maintenance and Maintenance Support Team (MST) support.

(h) Health Services detachment. Provides preventive medicine, casualty collection/evacuation, limited field surgical capabilities, dental care, and temporary hospitalization.

(6) Maritime Special Purpose Force (MSPF)

(a) The MSPF is task organized from MEU(SOC) assets to provide a special operations capable force that can be quickly tailored to accomplish a specific mission, and employed either as a complement to conventional MAGTF operations or in the execution of a selected maritime special operations mission. Particular emphasis is placed on operations requiring precision skills that normally are not resident in traditional amphibious raid companies. Command and control of the MSPF will remain with the MEU(SOC) Commander. The MSPF is not designed to duplicate existing capabilities of SOF, but is intended to focus on operations in a maritime environment. The MSPF is not capable of operating independently of its parent MEU; however, it is capable of conducting operations with, or in support of SOF. The MSPF task organization can be enhanced with the addition of the ARG's Naval Special Warfare Task Unit (NSWTU) detachment. The MSPF normally is structured as follows

1 CE. The commander of the MSPF will be designated by the MEU(SOC) commander. The command element is normally structured as follows

a Commander, MSPF.

b Team(s), Communication Det.

c Team(s), Human Exploitation Team (HET).

d Team(s), Medical Section.

2 Security Element. The security element is normally structured around a platoon provided by the BLT and may be augmented by the NSWTU embarked with the ARG. The security element will act as a reinforcing unit, a support unit, a diversionary unit, or an extraction unit. The security element may be structured as follows

a Rifle Platoon (-) (REIN).

b NSWTU, PRIBRON (As required).

3 Assault Element (AE). The AE is the main effort of the MSPF and is organized to perform assault, explosive breaching, internal security, and sniper functions. The assault function will normally be executed by the FORECON detachment. Mission-specific augmentation (e.g., additional sniper support, specialized demolitions, explosive ordnance disposal, SIGINT/EW, etc.) will be

25 Sep 01

provided from other MEU(SOC) assets or from the NSWTU embarked with the ARG. The AE is normally structured as follows

- a Det, Force Recon.
- b Team(s), Security.
- c Team, EOD Det.
- d Team(s), Combat Photo Det.

3 Support Element. The support element normally is composed of assets from the BLT Reconnaissance Platoon and Scout Sniper Platoon (R&S/sniper support) coupled with elements of the ACE, RADBN Det, COMM det, and HET assets from the MEU(SOC) CE. Additional capability may be provided by the NSWTU embarked with the ARG. The support element is normally structured as follows:

Platoons.

- a Team(s), Reconnaissance and Scout Sniper

- b Team(s), Communications Det.

- c Team(s), RadBn Det.

- d Team(s), HET Det.

- e NSWTU, PHIBRON (As required).

- f Aviation Support Element. Capable of precise night-vision flying and navigation, various insertion/extraction means and forward arming and refueling point operations. The specific structure of the aviation support element will vary depending on the lift requirements and distance to the crisis site.

b. Reserve Applicability. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Reserve.



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## MEU (SOC) STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

COMMAND ELEMENT (CE)	GROUND COMBAT ELEMENT (GCE)	AVIATION COMBAT ELEMENT (ACE)	MEU SERVICE SUPPORT GROUP (MSSG)
MEU(SOC) command and control is provided by the Command Element.	The GCE is structured around a reinforced infantry battalion.	The ACE is a composite helicopter squadron.	The MSSG provides the following:
Approximately 169 personnel: USMC: 25 OFF and 140 ENL USN: 1 OFF and 3 ENL	Approximately 1200 personnel: USMC: 59 OFF and 1086 ENL USN: 3 OFF and 50 ENL	Approximately 417 personnel: USMC: 75 OFF and 337 ENL USN: 1 OFF and 4 ENL	Approximately 275 personnel: USMC: 15 OFF and 235 ENL USN: 3 OFF and 22 ENL
MEU(SOC) Commander and Staff	H&S Company	Medium Helicopter Squadron Det.	Headquarters and Service Platoon
Force Reconnaissance Det.	Rifle Company x 3	Heavy Helicopter Squadron Det.	Communications Det.
Force Imagery Interpreter Unit Det.	Weapons Company	Light Attack Helicopter Squadron Det.	Maintenance Det.
Interrogator Translator Team	Tank Platoon	Marine Attack Squadron Det.	Supply Det.
Counterintelligence Team	Artillery Battery	Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squadron Det.	Landing Support Battalion Det.
Topographic Platoon Det.	LAR Platoon/Company	Marine Air Control Group Det.	Medical / Dental Det.
Radio Battalion Det.	Shore Fire Control Party	Marine Wing Support Squadron Det.	Engineer Support Battalion Det.
Communications Battalion Det.	Combat Engineer Platoon	Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron Det.	Motor Transport Battalion Det.
Universal Spotter Det.	Reconnaissance Platoon		
	Assault Amphibian Vehicle Platoon		
	Scout Sniper Platoon		



Enclosure (1)

MCO 3120.9B  
25 Sep 01

MAJOR END ITEMS  
(For a notional MEU(SOC))

CE	BLT	ACE	MSSG
(1) MEWSS LAV	(7) LAVs	(12) CH-46Es	(2) ROWPUs
(14)HMMWVs	(15)AAVs	(4) CH-53Es	(5) Refuelers
(6) CRRCs	* (4) Tanks	(4) AH-1Ws	(1) M88A1
(1) JTF Enabler	(6) M198s	(2-3) UH-1Ns	(18) 5-Ton
	(20)CRRCs	(6) AV-8Bs	(1) AAVR7
	(15)5-Ton Trucks	(2) KC-130's	(18)HMMWVs
	(8) 81MMs	(OPCON)	(2) ACE
	(8) TOW Launchers	(2) Avengers	(1) D-7
	(64)HMMWVs	(3) Stinger Tms	(1) SEE Tractor
	(7)IFAV's	(5) HMMWVs	

Enclosure (2)

\*31ST MEU does not embark tanks